

# stay

the story of a boy, a dog  
and what matters most

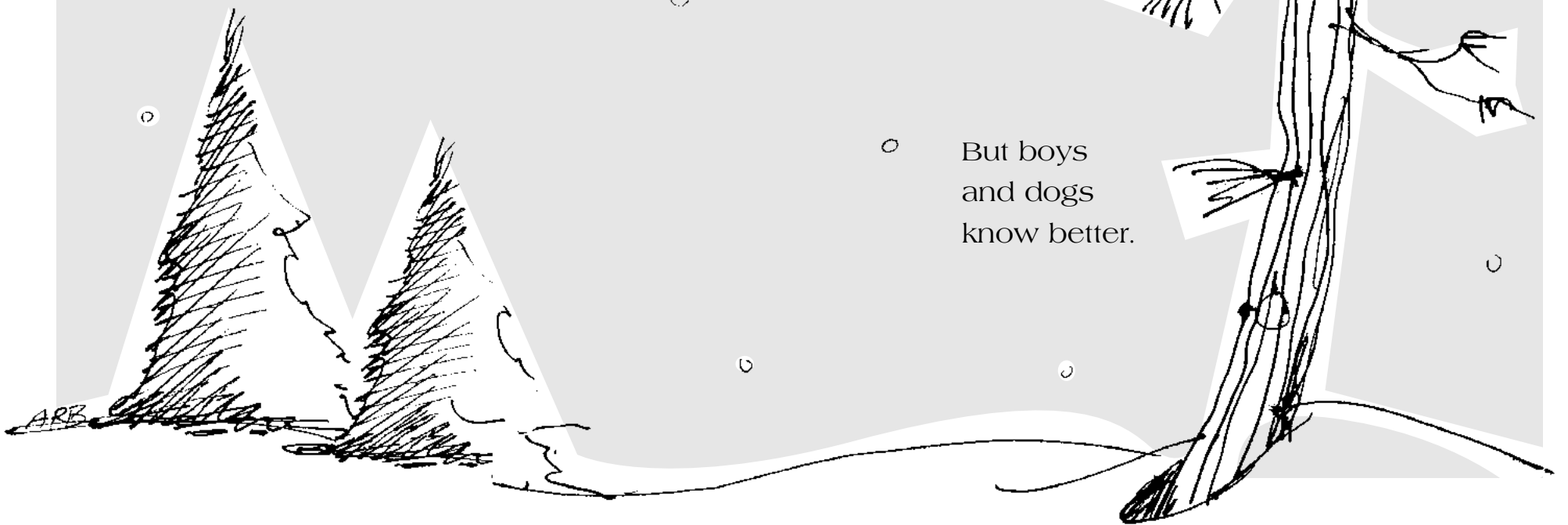


allen arnold

illustrated by scott arbuckle

Some say it's too cold to play in  
parks on snow days.

But boys  
and dogs  
know better.



They slid down  
snow-covered  
hills,

played hide and seek  
between leaning  
snowmen,

and caught snowflakes  
on tongue tips.

It was like  
playing in a  
slow-motion  
snow globe.

Suddenly the boy heard music.  
He stopped playing and ran after  
the sound.

And the dog ran  
with him.



In the middle of the swirling snow

Then they found the sound.

all by herself

stood a lady playing happy music  
from her horn.

The boy and his dog had been to the park many times. But they had never seen a woman playing a trombone in the snow.

Climbing on the park bench, they sat and stared at the sight.



The trombone lady swayed with joy  
as her music reached the sky.

When it ended, the boy asked if she  
had more music.

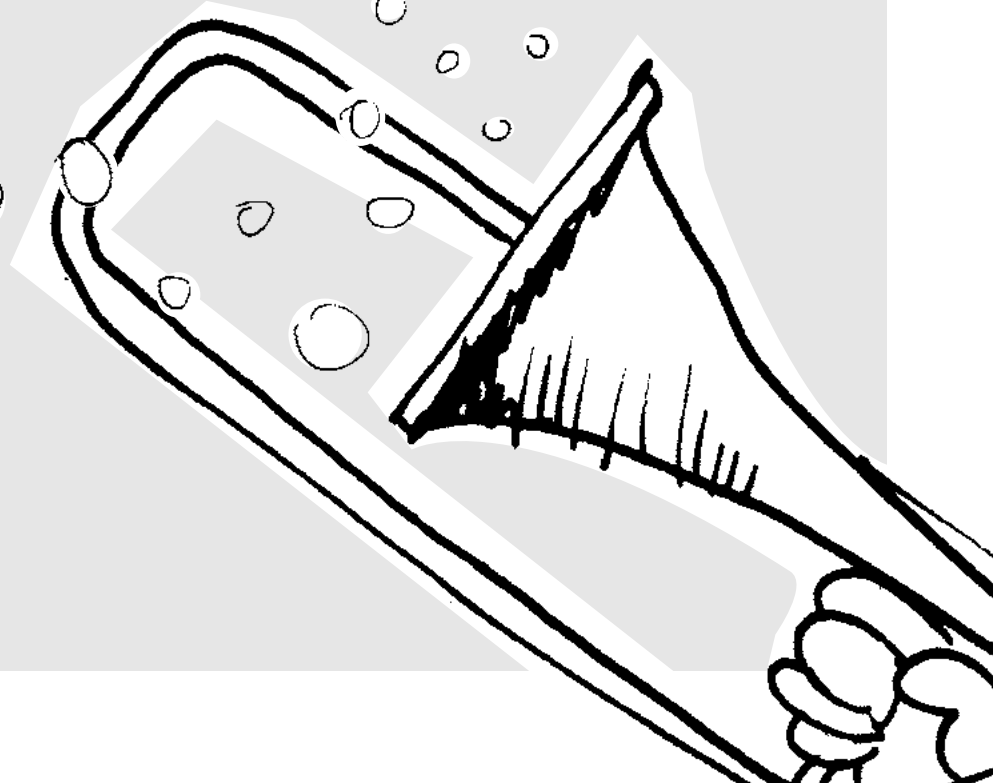
“This old horn never runs out of  
music,” she laughed.

She then pulled a blue bottle from  
her coat and poured sparkly liquid  
right into the mouth of her horn.

The boy’s eyes grew wide.

She winked at him. “Something special  
for a special song.”



A hand is shown holding a trombone. The bell of the trombone is tilted upwards, and a stream of bubbles is coming out of it. The bubbles are of various sizes and are scattered across the upper half of the page. The background is a light gray color.

She blew into the horn. And  
something wonderful happened.

First one, then two, then hundreds of  
bubbles soared from the trombone.  
Soon all three were lost in a sea of  
music, bubbles, and laughter.

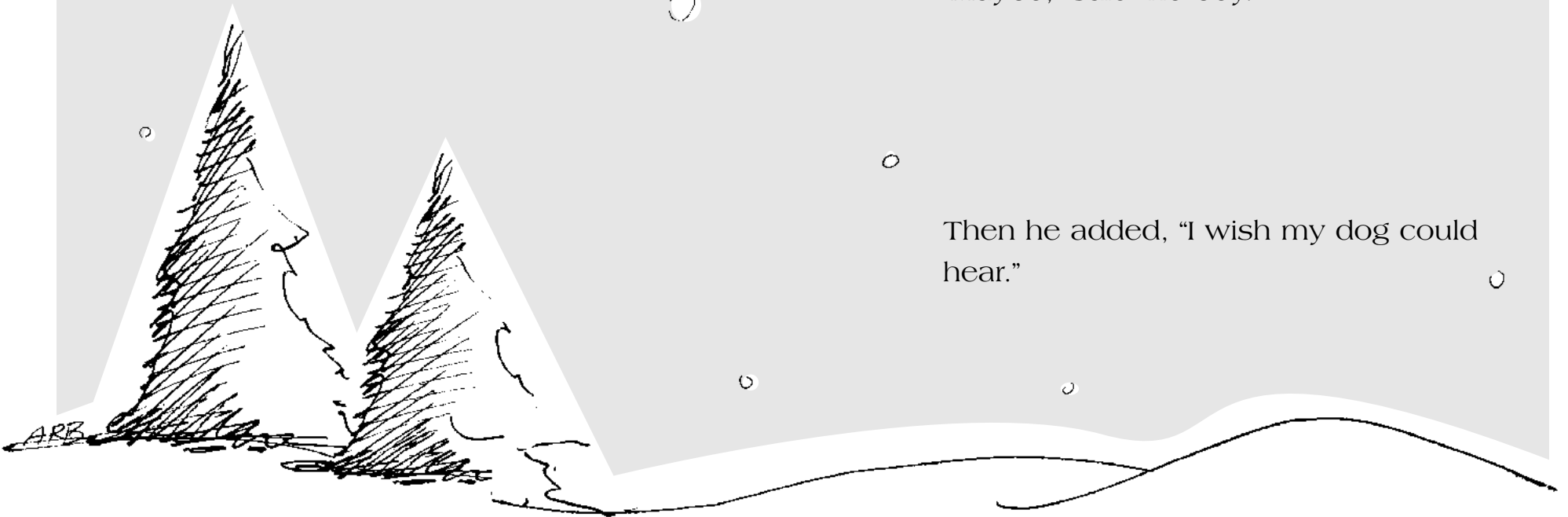


"Bubbles make the music better," he said.

"Maybe bubbles just help you hear better," she smiled.

"Maybe," said the boy.

Then he added, "I wish my dog could hear."



“She can’t hear my music?” the  
trombone lady asked.

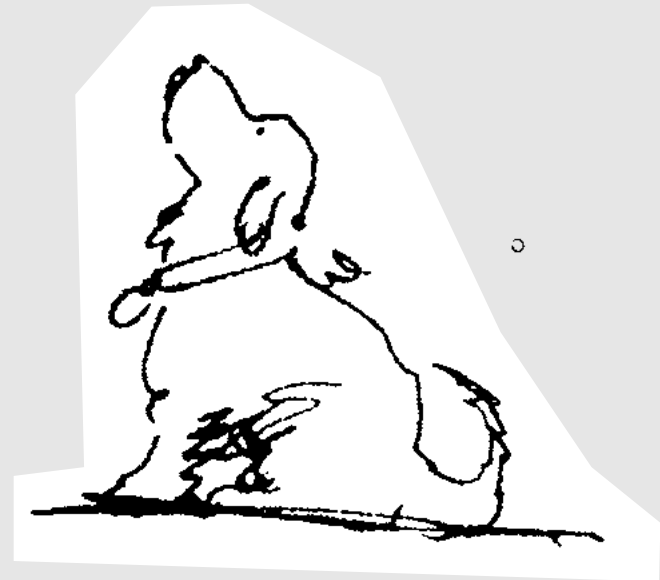
Rubbing the dog’s furry head, he said  
softly, “She can’t hear anything. She’s  
deaf.”

For a long time,  
the three just sat on the bench  
watching the falling snow.

The trombone lady thought how sad it  
must be . . .

to not hear music  
or laughter  
or the voice  
of your best friend.

“Well, when I want her to stay close,  
I tap her side twice with my hand.  
Then she knows.”



“If she can’t hear, how do you talk to  
her?” she asked.

“Knows what?”, the trombone lady  
asked.

The boy smiled. “To stay.”

“But I’ve never been able to tell her about my day. Or ask her what makes her happy. Do you think that makes her sad?”

The trombone lady thought about this as she stood up.

The boy pressed his hands over his ears until he couldn’t hear anything. “What if that’s all she hears when I tell her I love her?”

“I have an idea,” she said as she knelt on the ground and slowly began stirring earth and snow together with her hands.

“A greater man than me did this to help a blind man see. Maybe it will help two best friends hear what really matters.”



The boy and the dog jumped off the bench to see what she was doing.

She looked into the dog's eyes and smiled. "Are you ready girl?"

She then dabbed the muddy mixture on the dog's ears, kissing her cold nose as the boy watched in wonder.



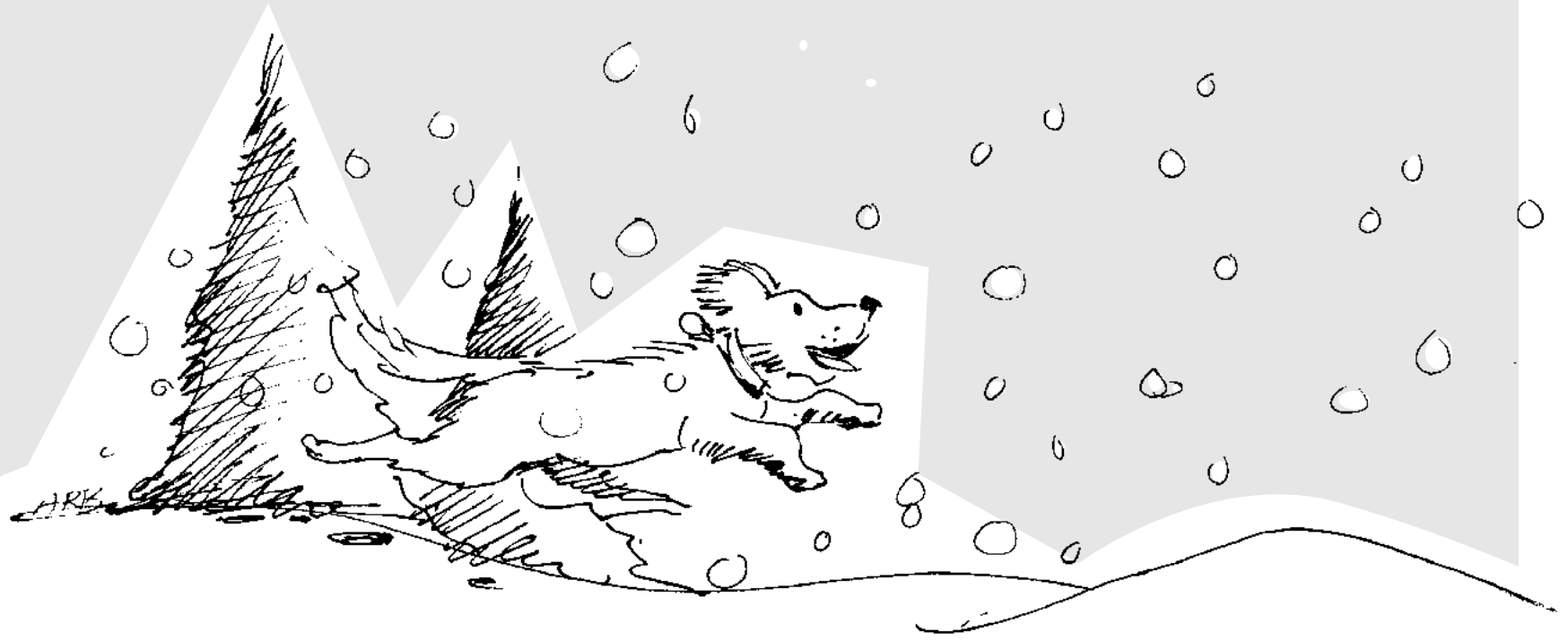
The trombone lady then pointed to  
the snow-covered woods and  
whispered . . .

“Go!”

The dog raced toward the trees.

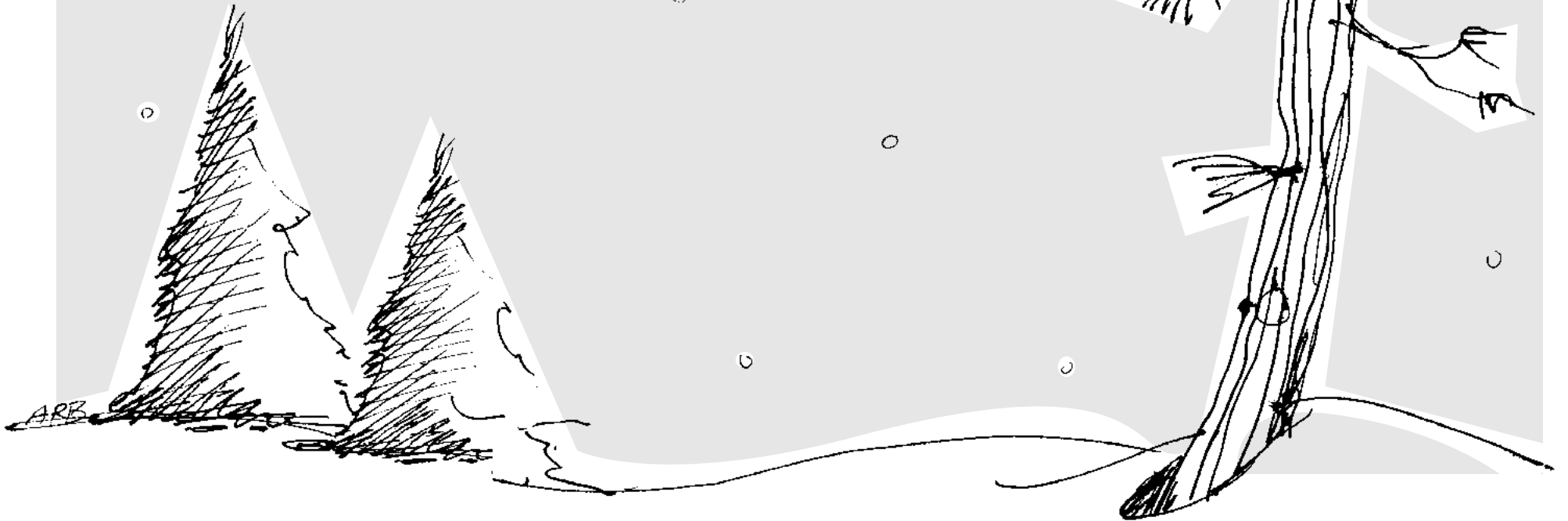
Even though the boy knew his dog  
couldn't hear him, he shouted the only  
word he could think to say . . .

“Stay!”

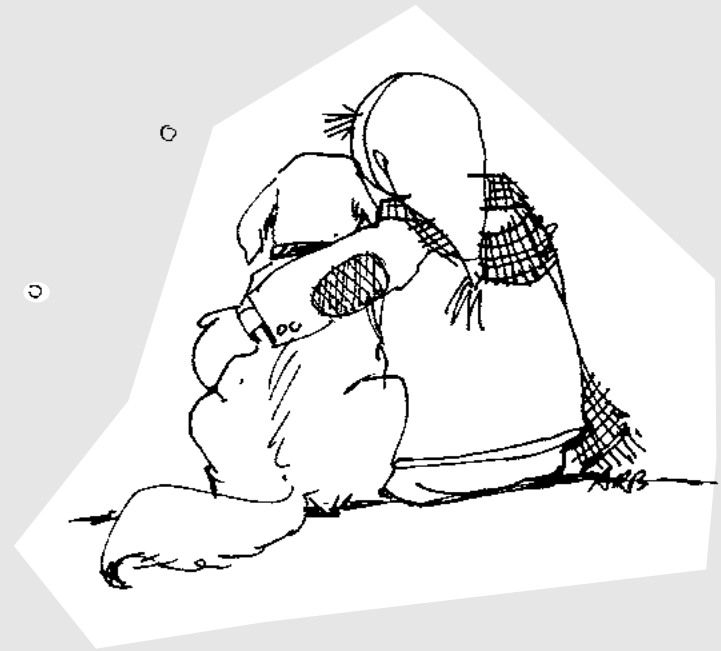


"She'll be fine," the trombone lady  
said. Motioning toward the trees  
with her muddied hand she said,  
"You go too. Tell her what you've  
always wanted to say. And believe."

The boy nodded. Then ran into the  
white woods.



He found his small friend in the forest sitting on an ancient rock. She was watching snow fall, her tail wagging.



He ran to her side and hugged her cold fur.

“Don’t ever leave me,” he said softly.



He looked at the mud smudges on her ears.

“I wish you could hear me, girl.”

But even a boy knows that mud can't make deaf ears hear.



That's when he heard the trombone lady's music again. At first softly. Then filling the forest.

But this time, he wasn't the only one who could hear it.

Her muddy ears perked up and her  
tail began to wag.

That's when he knew.

Somehow,  
she could  
hear.



Suddenly it was a world of two.  
A boy and his dog in a swirl of snow  
and hope.



At last she could hear how much he  
loved her.

The words flowed from  
the small boy's heart.

She listened.  
And drank his  
words in  
deeply.

"I love how we go everywhere together."

"The sound your paws make on wood floors when you run down the hall to my room."



"The smell of your puppy breath when you lick my face a hundred times without stopping."



"The way you sleep by my side so I can touch your fur when I'm scared."

"And how you know I'm on my way home long before I get there."



"Don't ever go," he said.

    "Let's be together  
    for ever and

        ever and

            ever.

His dog smiled and barked happily.

"What are you saying, girl?"

Looking at her muddy ears, he got an idea. He scooped some mud from the ground and smeared it onto his ears.

"Now maybe I can hear what makes you happy too."

As the boy was talking, the snow turned to rain. And the mud began to drizzle off her ears.

Not knowing what to do, he cupped  
his small hands over her ears. He  
tried to keep the rain away.

But he couldn't.

Slowly, every last bit of mud  
ran through his tiny fingers  
into the slushy snow.



The trombone lady came up the hill  
and found them sitting in the rain.

“What’s wrong?” she asked.

The boy began to cry, his tears mixing  
with the rain. The dog leaned closer,  
sad at his sadness. She caught his  
tears in her fur.

“We need more mud.”

“The trombone lady placed her hand on his shoulder. “Honey, you don’t need mud.”

“But she can’t hear my voice. And I can’t hear hers.”

You never needed words before. You sure don’t need them now.”

The boy shook his head. “But she never got to tell me what makes her happy.”



“Then keep listening to her. She’ll find a way to make sure you know.”

The trombone lady looked to the sky. The rain had stopped.

Bending down, she kissed them both on their wet heads.

She started to leave, then turned back. “Thanks for listening to my music. Few people still hear it.”

She smiled and walked back into the wintry woods.



The dog nuzzled closer to the boy.  
Both were cold.

“I love you,” said the boy.

Then in the silence of the white  
woods, his dog slowly raised her paw  
and tapped him on his knee.

Once.

Twice.

He smiled with his entire face. It was  
their signal . . .

. . . to stay.



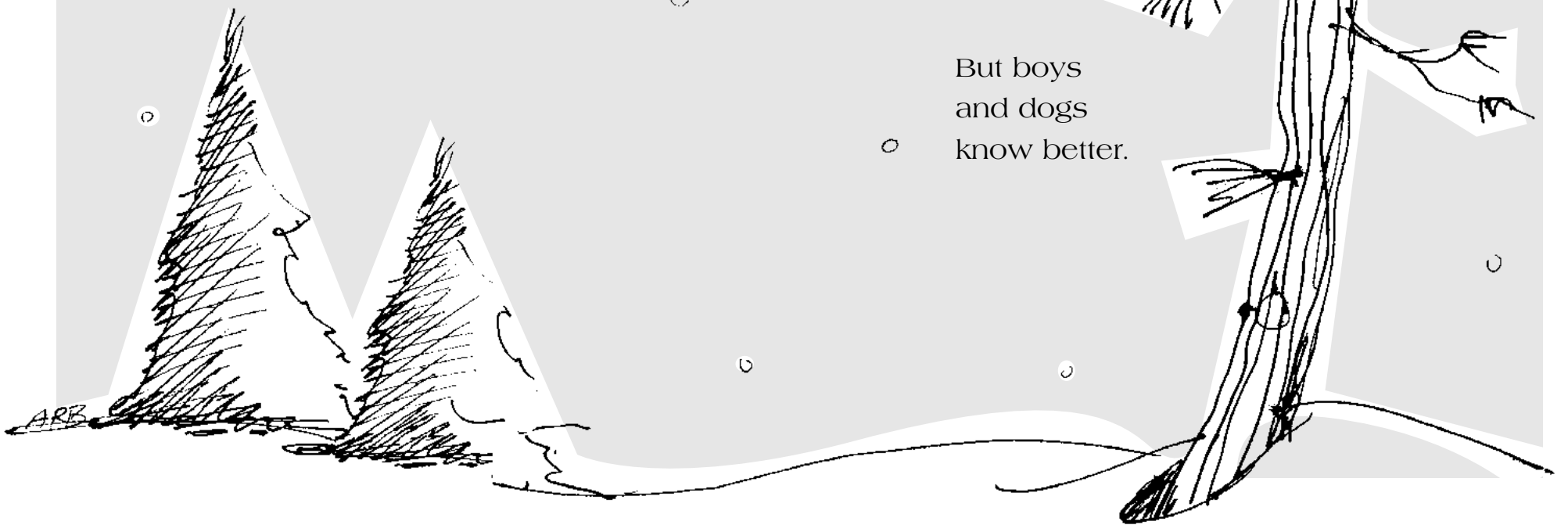
More than any words . . . even more  
than hearing . . . she just wanted  
them to be together.

Even when he would grow  
up and she would grow old, she  
wanted her best friend to stay.

And he did.

Some say it's not possible to love this  
deeply.

But boys  
and dogs  
know better.



This book is dedicated to  
—and inspired by—  
my furry best friend,  
Brandy.

## There Is More

I created this short story in 2003  
as a personal tribute to my dog Brandy.  
I've since published numerous books  
on God, Story, and Creativity.  
Find out more at [withallen.com](http://withallen.com).

Receive free daily emails  
on God, Story, and Creativity  
at [withallen.com/sign-up](http://withallen.com/sign-up).

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stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any  
means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—  
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Here is an unforgettable yet simple story that celebrates the special bond between dog lovers and their life-long friends.

What does your dog most long to hear from you . . .

and what do you wish you could ask them?

This wintry tale will warm your heart . . .

and reveal what really matters most.

Ideal for times of celebration or comfort, this is a story you'll return to time and again.

